Special Report from Israel

Not Just One But Two "Integration" Problems: Darker Oriental Jews As Well As Arabs

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An Affluent Society But Living Beyond Its Means

To see Israel again after eight years is to be struck at every turn by the triumphant evidence of progress. The flood of new immigrants, which has more than tripled its population since the achievement of independence 18 years ago, is reflected in a continuous building boom. The dismal acres of shanty towns (*ma'abaroth*) hastily erected for new immigrants were still distressingly visible in 1956. Today they have given way (except for a hard-core of 3,000 which still clings to the old hovels) before whole new neighborhoods —and cities—of towering apartment houses. The roads have widened, the traffic jams grown worse. The country throbs with expansive vitality. Israel has become an affluent society. Even in the once Spartan kibbutzim, the outhouse and the cold outside shower have been replaced by private lavatories and running hot water, provided by individual solar heaters. Everywhere there are flowers. Even in Tel Aviv the whole new northern extension of that rather grubby city has become downright pretty with tree-lined boulevards and flower gardens. Not all the changes are to the taste of those who loved the old Palestine. The Dan Hotel in Tel Aviv has become as over-sumptuous as its counterparts in Miami. The Desert Inn outside Beer Sheva, no longer a sleepy Bedouin town, might be in luxurious Palm Springs, except for the *mezuzoth* beside every door and the Arab-with-camel on duty at the entrance. The *dolce vita* has arrived, as the old-timers complain, complete with juvenile delinquents and call girls.

No More Fedayeen

The other big change since the spring of 1956 is in the sense of security. Then infiltrating *fedayeen* from Egyptian training centers in the Gaza strip and Sinai were shooting up settlements at night and making travel after dark hazardous. The Sinai campaign later that year may have been a humiliating setback for England and France, but for Israel it put a stop to these terrorist raids, smashed Czech and Soviet arms dumps across the Egyptian border and established a UN force at the narrow straits where Eilat's access to the Red Sea had been shut off by Nasser. This much was accomplished, whatever the wisdom of the retaliatory spiral which led up to the Sinai campaign, and its cost in the alienation of Afro-Asian sympathy from Israel.* Today one can travel everywhere with assurance. Unusually heavy rains had turned the country greener and lovelier than we had ever seen it in seven previous trips. Our visit was a succession of unforgettable scenes: Haifa's gleaming harbor from the top of Mt. Carmel, the wide lawns of Mishmar Ha-Emek, the rich green vistas of the once malarial Valley of Israel, the holy places of Nazareth, Tiberius and Safad, lunch on the eastern shores of Lake Galilee at Ein Gev within the shadow of the Syrian border, the mauve hills at twilight which look down on the fertile collectives in that narrow "finger" of Israel which stretches northward between Lebanon and Syria. Later we saw Ashdod, Israel's biggest seaport rising on the dunes where the Philistines once dwelt, and Kiryat Dan, a new complex of factories and farms to the north of Beer Sheva. We saw old friends in kibbutzim like Shoval and Hatzor nearby which were once lonely military outposts and are now thriving centers of rural industry as well as agriculture, for since 1959 the industrial byproducts of the collective settlements equal or surpass their agricultural output. The climax was our climb up those venerable hills to Jerusalem. There one can still step backward in time, and savor ways of life centuries apart. A fashionable crowd takes tea on the veranda of the King David overlooking the walls of the Old City and a few blocks away little boys in ear curls and suspenders rock back and

(Continued on Page Two)

Some Tovarisch!

"Your struggle against imperialism and exploitation give me the right to call you comrade, my dear friend, President Nasser."

—Premier Khrushchev at the Aswan Dam, May 14

"NASSER: Our nations, hand in hand, will shape a better future. Our mutual affection has an historic background, and I believe that our common interests in so many areas will draw us ever closer. Have you ever found an Arab, a Minister or a simple man in the street, who is not friendly to the Germans?

"FREY: Certainly not.

"NASSER: You will never find one because there aren't any. That would run counter to our mentality. Our sympathies in the Second World War were on the German side. The Speaker of our Parliament was then imprisoned for pro-German sympathies.

"FREY: We would gladly have won the war and freed the Speaker and all the Arabs.

"NASSER (laughs heartily): We will work together for freedom and peace on the basis of justice. For us Arabs this means the right to the unity of our nation on our hereditary territory and for you Germans it means exactly the same—reunification in one State. That is our heart's desire. All my good wishes to the German people and for you personally, my dear Dr. Frey, and for your great purposes."

—This was an interview given by Nasser in Cairo, on the eve of Khrushchev's visit, to Dr. Gerhard Frey, publisher of Germany's leading neo-Nazi organ, the* Deutsche National und Soldaten Zeitung, *and published verbatim under flaring headlines "War With Israel Unavoidable" in its issue of May 1.

*** See Michael Bar-Zohar's Suez: Ultra Secret, newly published in Paris and Simha Flapan's critical article on it in the May issue of The New Outlook, a Middle East monthly devoted to Arab-Jewish reconciliation.**

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(Continued from Page One)

forth over their pious schoolbooks in the back alley yeshivahs of Mea Shearim, keeping alive a medieval universe of orthodox Jewry.

Beneath the prosperous and picturesque surface there are problems grave enough to threaten Israel's future. But for those who have seen the crises of its earlier years it is impossible not to be optimistic. I first saw Palestine November 2, 1945, the day the Haganah began the war against the British by blowing up the watch towers from which they laid in wait for illegal immigrant ships; it seemed hopeless for so small a force to challenge so great an empire. In the spring of 1946 I travelled with the illegals on one of these Jewish Mayflowers. In 1947 I saw the British impose martial law on Tel Aviv in an effort to wipe out the terrorist campaign against them. In 1948 I was a witness to the joint attack of the Arab States on what was then an ill-prepared tiny community of 650,000 Jews.* In 1949 and 1950 I saw the lack of food and the letdown in morale which followed the war and the onset of the Arab blockade. To have seen such odds overcome makes it hard to take too tragically the problems of the dynamic, confident and expanding Israel of today.

A Growing Trade Deficit

They are nonetheless serious. The first is fiscal: Israel is living beyond its means. Its rate of economic growth is topped only by Japan's and few countries can match its steep rate of increase in exports. But in 1963 its adverse surplus of imports over exports was still $420 million and in the first quarter of 1964 its trade deficit rose to three times that in the first quarter of 1963. Capital imports have been running ahead of the trade deficit so that the government's cash reserves have been growing. But of total capital imports in 1963 of $500 million, $162 million was in German reparations and restitution payments which will now decline sharply. Israel will soon have to meet the challenge of austerity and better distribution of income. Its affluent society, like America's has little-seen but wide fringes of poverty. An ostentatious luxury by the rich does not make this more bearable. And there, as in America, the problem of poverty is intensified by color and "race." Israel has a double "Negro" problem. The darker Jews from the Orient and North Africa, as well as the Arab minority, suffer from prejudice.

The usual Jewish attitude toward the Arabs is one of contemptuous superiority. Our driver northward was a Jew who had fled from the Nazi advance into Hungary but that did not save him from racist habits. When I suggested that we give a boy a lift, he refused, saying the boy was an Arab. When I asked what was the difference, he said Arabs smelled bad. I said that is what anti-Semites said of us Jews in the outside world but this made no impression. His attitude, it is painful to report, is typical. Israel is a country not only of full employment but of labor shortages. Thousands of Arabs do the menial tasks of Tel Aviv. They find it as hard to obtain decent lodgings as Negroes do in America and for the same reasons; many "pass" as Jews to circumvent prejudice. In Haifa I visited the only secondary school attended by both Jews and Arabs but even there the classes turned out to be separate. The State of Israel has done much in a material way for the Arabs but the sense of humiliation outweighs any improvement. The spectacle fills one with despair. For if

* In Underground to Palestine (1946) I told the story of the illegal trip and in This Is Israel (1948) the story of how Israel won its war of independence.

Bonn's Strange Delay

"Bonn—Herr Hoecherl, the West German Minister of the Interior, told the Bundestag yesterday that Dr. Erhard had given his approval to amending the passport laws with the intention of hindering the disputed activities of German scientists and technicians in Egypt. He expressed regret, however, that the efforts of his Ministry to draw up a bill had so far met with little outside support.

"The Minister's replies failed to satisfy the Social Democrats. They pointed out that 10 months after a unanimous Bundestag resolution, a Bill had still not been tabled, or a date given by the Government when it would so so. For more than a year now, Israel had been urging the Federal government to devise ways to stop German citizens helping the Egyptians develop offensive weapons. Herr Hoecherl maintained that 'exceptional legal difficulties' had prevented the Federal government from responding before.

"An SPD [Social Democrat] member argued that it was not only legal difficulties but political pressure from Arab countries that had induced the Government to hold back."

—The Times (London) May 1

Nasser Turns One Face Toward A French Socialist Editor, Quite Another to a Neo-Nazi

"Yemen is not your last combat. . . . Now it is necessary to look toward Palestine."

—Nasser to his shock troops, quoted in the French independent Socialist weekly,* France-Observateur, *April 30.

"War is not a solution. . . . It is relatively easy to begin a war, but who can know where it will lead or how it will end? No, we do not want war. But we are rendered uneasy by the logic of Israel's development."

—Nasser to Gilles Martinet, of* France-Observateur, *interview in its issue of April 30.

"FREY: Do you regard a peaceful solution of the Israel problem as possible?

"NASSER: Absolutely not. . . .

"FREY: Your Excellency, allow me to ask quite brutally: Will you crush Israel?

"NASSER: I hope so. . . .

"FREY: Will you be able to clean up the Israel question within a generation?

"NASSER: In schaa Allah (If Allah wills).

"FREY: If the German [reparations] payments [to Israel] should one day dry up . . . (hiatus in original).

"NASSER (Interrupting): That is an especially sad chapter, a burden on our friendship. The German payments are the elixir of life for Israel. Israel is unthinkable without your supplies. I no longer understand the Germans.

"FREY: Those payments were based on the murder of Jews.

"NASSER: But the lie about six million murdered Jews is not taken seriously by anyone, not even by the simplest man here in our country."

—Nasser's interview with the publisher of the* Deutsche National und Soldaten Zeitung *in its issue of May 1 which we picked up at a newstand in Athens on our way to Israel.

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Jews, after all their experience of suffering, prove no better than the rest of mankind once in the majority, what hope for a world as torn apart as our is by tribalism and hate?

Yiddish Becomes Upper Class

More progress is being made in dealing with Israel's other integration problem—that of the Jews from the Orient and Africa. For these — unlike the Arabs — are people Israel wants. That does not save them from being looked down upon. Half the people of Israel are now from countries where Yiddish is unknown. But in Israel, for the first time, the tender language of East European ghettoes has become an upper class tongue. The Ashkenazi, the Yiddish-speaking Jews, hold the commanding positions in the community. The Sephardi, or Oriental Jews, speaking Arabic, French or the Old Castilian of the Spain from which they were driven five centuries ago, are the hewers of wood and drawers of water. They make up half the population but their children are only 15% of those in secondary schools and only 5% of those in the university. Their cultural level is lower. They cannot afford to send their children to the higher schools. Discrimination has given them solidarity and "communal" tickets have begun to appear in local elections, pitting Sephardi against Ashkenazi. The right wing parties are making demagogic appeals to the Oriental Jews. On the other side one Yiddish speaking *meshuganah* has just published a book to prove that the Yiddish-speaking from the West are the only true Jews! The government is trying its best to give preferences to the Orientals where equally qualified. It fears lest Israel run into a situation like that of Belgium where after 150 years the conflict between Walloon and Fleming divides the nation. Fortunately the common language of Hebrew, and the melting pot of school and Army, are available to ease Israel's divisions. Education is seen as the key to amalgamation but education costs money and here we come to Israel's other big headache, that of defense.

The amount spent on defense is a secret but some notion of its magnitude may be gathered from a veiled figure in the budget. This shows that about a third goes for an item called "Security, special budget and reserve." This has been rising. It was less than $300 million or 28.3% of the 1963/64 budget and close to $400 million or 30.9% of the 1964/65 budget. The next largest item was education, but this is less than 8% of the budget. Were the arms race in the Middle East to end, Israel could afford to make secondary education free, too, as elementary education is now. Nothing could do more to develop her human resources and end the rankling inferiority of Oriental Jew and Arab. Another way to measure the impact of the arms race is to notice that "security, special budget and reserve" amounts to more than German reparations, UJA, private gifts and donations of food surpluses put together. If Israel enjoyed real peace, she would no longer be dependent on the bread of charity.

However one looks at it, peace is Israel's overriding problem. It's hard for a poor country to keep up with the Joneses in armament. "In the war for independence," said one of

(Continued on Page Four)

Why Some Want Nuclear Arms

"In Paris, Gamal Abdul Nasser made it clear that he intends to make war on Israel, though the threat was couched in diplomatic language. To say that unless Israel implements UN resolutions concerning the repatriation of Palestinian refugees, these refugees will use force to achieve their aims, and the Arab States assist them, in practice means war—for though the UN resolutions speak about 'repatriation or resettlement', the Arab states will certainly prevent any attempt to reach agreement on the basis of resettlement and compensation, and Israel cannot afford to permit repatriation of hundreds of thousands of hostile Arabs.

"The Egyptians are meanwhile reported to have providentially fixed the date of their attack on Israel for Easter 1966, by when they hope to have sufficient missiles available to wipe out the major Israeli population centres. The German scientists are continuing their work in the missile sphere. . . .

"There is nothing inherently improbable about the 1966 date for war in the Middle East. The best way of delaying such a war—barring resolute UN action in advance, which seems wishful thinking at the moment—is further strengthening of Israel's striking force—especially as regards unconventional weapons."

—The Israel Economist, April 1964

An Appeal By Israeli Liberals Against A Nuclear Arms Race in the Middle East

"Our Committee is concerned with the prevention of nuclear arms in the Arab-Israeli area. We support the denuclearization of the whole Middle East, but lay stress on the Arab-Israeli region (which includes a part of Northern Africa). The reasons are obvious:

"1. There is little danger of war between other Mid-Eastern States. The Israeli-Arab relations, however, are permanently strained and often on the brink of war. Two wars occurred between Egypt and Israel in the last 15 years: 1948 and 1956.

"2. The main antagonists, Egypt and Israel, have densely populated centres, among the densest on the globe, the Egyptian Nile delta and the Israeli Mediterranean coast. Even a 'primitive' nuclear encounter would destroy millions of human beings (and two of the most important traditional sites of the Western World). Owing to geographical, technological and other limitations no warning system is feasible. *The deterrent aspect of nuclear weapons has no meaning here, since the first strike may finish the job.*

"3. Although Egypt and Israel are small parties, their military conflict would have immediate international implications. With a nuclear background, it may provoke a universal disaster.

"4. Both in Egypt and in Israel, there are influential circles who favor a nuclear 'option.' The attitude of President Abdul Nasser is at least equivocal. Israel, being a democracy, is discussing the problem openly. Our Committee initiated the debate, and it is continuing at a growing measure. Egypt, with its one-party system unfortunately has no such possibilities.

"International friends of both countries, who care for the fate of humanity at large, may be helpful by bringing together responsible leaders of both sides. You are surely aware that Lord Russell and his friends expressed their deep anxiety over the current developments in our area, by publishing their message to the rulers, Prime Ministers, and peoples of the States concerned. The reaction was not encouraging. An unofficial approach to influential individuals and groups may perhaps be more fruitful at this stage."

—Committee for the Denuclearization of the Israeli-Arab Area. Among its members is the philosopher, Martin Buber.

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Now Is The Time to Nip in The Bud A Middle Eastern Nuclear Arms Race

(Continued from Page Three)

those tireless old-timers who make Israel the dynamic community that it is, "a Spitfire was hot stuff. We could buy one second-hand for 2,000 pounds. Now the Mystére costs us $750,000; the Mirage, $1,000,000; the super-Mirage, $1,250,000. But planes and tanks are given to Egypt by the Russians for very little. They gave Nasser 15 submarines and a flotilla of Komars, swift mosquito boats armed with missiles which can shoot from 30 kilometers offshore. Now we're afraid Egypt may get enriched uranium from Moscow, too." Between Russian aid and German scientists there is a real fear that Egypt may some day be the instrument for a second go at Hitler's "final solution." Khrushchev's visit stirred deep anxiety. "The Government of Israel regrets," Prime Minister Eshkol told the Knesset pointedly May 20, "that in spite of the Egyptian ruler's aggressive declarations against Israel he receives political support and supplies of arms from sources that generally advocate peace and co-existence." It is tragic that Israel could not have joined its neighbor in rejoicing over so fruitful and historic an achievement as the Aswan Dam. And it was mischief-making demagogy for Khrushchev to join the Arab States in stigmatizing as an imperialist plot the beginnings of the Jordan water scheme which could benefit the whole area and does no more than put to use millions of precious gallons otherwise wasted in the Dead Sea.

The Shadow of Ben Gurion

To inflame the Arab-Israeli quarrel is to risk no small conflagration. Eshkol's statement on the eve of his visit to the United States reiterated previous denials that atomic development in Israel was designed for other than peaceful purposes. But doubts persist. There are circles in Israel which see nuclear arms as a necessity for survival. They fear that neo-Nazi German scientists are using Egypt as a proving ground for "unconventional" weapons. The arms race between Egypt and Israel can become the next hot spot in the proliferation of nuclear arms. A committee of distinguished scholars and scientists in Israel (see box bottom of p. 3) have began to agitate for a denuclearized Arab-Israeli area but there is no echo from Egypt, where a police state represses free opinion. Behind the quarrel which is dividing Israel's ruling party, the Mapai, the quarrel between Ben Gurion and Eshkol over the irrepressible Lavon affair, is a struggle between younger military men who put their faith in force and an Old Guard which wishes to steer a course of moderation away from the apocalyptic adventurism of Ben Gurion. The Suez affair showed that B.G. and the military were able to carry on secretly behind the back of civilian government. They might do so again. If the conversations with President Johnson strengthen Eshkol, they will make a contribution to peace. Now is the time to prevent Egypt and Israel from wasting their substance and endangering the world in the blind alley of a nuclear arms race. I hope to report further on this in a later issue.

Jews and Germans

"I am 75 years old and my age disqualifies me from appearing on the Junior page, but I cannot resist an urge to compliment Mr. Kurt Schwarzer most warmly on his letters.

"Are we, as Israelis and as Jews, going to be given a lesson in our own Talmudic teachings by a German and a Christian namely to 'Show love to your neighbor because he is like yourself?' Moreover the word 'neighbor' does not refer only to members of our own people because a few verses further in the text, the Egyptian is designated by the same term. And 'Do not despise the Egyptian, for you were a dweller in his land' and 'The sons shall not die for the sins of their fathers, but each one shall die for his own sins.'

"If we condemn outright *all* Germans and abstain from all contact with them, are we then better than the Nazis who had condemned all Jews? This mentality might help us build up a political state of Israel—a haven of refuge for the remnants and for the persecuted—but it will never be a true Jewish State, the guardian of the spiritual heritage of our ancient Kingdom and of the rich ethical and moral legacy of our long Exile."

—Dr. Elias Frenkel in a debate among German and Israeli youth in the Jerusalem Post May 15.

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